

The **MetroWest Transportation Taskforce** focuses on analyzing and advocating for MWGMC communities on transportation matters. Chaired by former state legislator John Stasik, the Transportation Task Force advocates for improved transportation services to the region, and strategizes to influence transportation planning and decision-making by the Boston MPO. The task force obtained a grant for a new LIFT 9 bus service under the **Suburban Mobility Program** on behalf of the Town of Framingham. MWGMC organized a collaborative effort for a Transportation Summit in late spring. The goal of this effort, **“You Can’t Grow if You Can’t Go”**, is to elevate the transportation discussion (adequacy of transportation infrastructure and adequate funding of transportation) to a higher level and connect it to the Smart Growth/Sustainable Development movement. A series of meetings have been established to continue this important dialogue.

FEMA has approved MAPC's application for a project that will result in a **Regional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan** for the municipalities in the MetroWest and MAGIC subregions. Under the grant, MAPC and MetroWest staff will work with communities to identify areas at risk of damage from natural hazards, evaluate existing protection measures, and develop a multiple-hazard mitigations strategy to reduce future damages.

REPORT OF THE MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD

The primary objective of the Municipal Light Plant (“MLP”) is to provide reliable electric service at competitive rates to Wellesley’s 9,907 residential and commercial customers. A secondary, but equally important objective, is to provide benefits to the Town. Under the leadership of the Municipal Light Board (“Board”) the MLP has operated with the mindset of a private business. To this end, the Board has placed the highest priority on providing the best customer service possible. The progress that has been made in this area is recognized by the 97% customer satisfaction rating in a Town-wide survey initiated by the Town’s Planning Department earlier this year. The Municipal Light Board consists of two members appointed by the Board of Selectmen, Gordon F. Kingsley and Thomas E. Peisch, as well as the three members of the Board of Public Works, William E. Charlton, David A. T. Donohue and Michael D. Humphrys.

During Fiscal Year 2005 (“FY05”) the Board continued with the funding of a very aggressive capital work plan. Two major projects were started this year and will be completed within the next fiscal year. The first of these projects was the \$2.9 million replacement of the 40-year-old Weston Road Substation. This project not only improves the reliability of electric service, but will also allow the MLP to meet the Town’s future demand for electricity. Since 1995 the MLP has experienced a 54% increase in its electrical demand. The second major project is the installation of a second underground supply line from NStar’s Needham Substation to the rebuilt Weston Road Substation. Once this line is completed each of Wellesley’s eight primary supply lines will be fed underground.

Wellesley’s electric rates are currently among the lowest in New England. FY05 represented the midpoint of the MLP’s favorable power supply contract with Constellation Energy Commodities Group (“Constellation”). Since power supply costs represent approximately 70% of the MLP’s total operating budget, the Constellation power supply contract is the single most important factor influencing Wellesley’s electric rates. The Constellation contract expires on September 30, 2007 and the staff is currently exploring alternative power supply options. Given today’s energy costs it is likely that Wellesley

residents and businesses will experience substantial rate increases in the future. Even with these anticipated rate increases, however, the Board is confident that Wellesley's electric rates will be well below the rates charged in surrounding communities served by investor owned utilities. *The Boston Globe* recently published an article that compared Wellesley's rates to those charged by investor owned utilities. In Wellesley, a residential customer using 500 kilowatt-hours a month will pay \$44. If that same customer lived in Newton, Natick or Needham the electric bill would be almost double, \$81.

For the 5th consecutive year the MLP was able to maintain its \$1 million cash payment to the Town. In FY05 the Board also approved a one-time cash payment of \$391,000 for the purchase of a Town-wide payroll system and other technology related acquisitions. The MLP provides other financial benefits to the Town in the form of reduced electric rates for all municipal buildings and facilities, subsidized street light rates, interest on cash balances and a fiber optic network to the schools and Town buildings.

The Municipal Light Plant has a number of major challenges to address in the not too distant future. The already complex power supply decision is further complicated by Wellesley's location in an area designated by ISO-New England as the Northeastern Massachusetts ("NEMA") Congestion Zone. The NEMA designation requires the MLP to pay a premium for power supply and transmission services. As if record setting fossil fuel prices and congestion zone premiums were not enough, the MLP's future power supply must take into consideration projected capacity shortfalls in New England beginning in 2009.

Fortunately, the MLP is well positioned to take on these challenges. Ten years of aggressive capital work plans will allow the MLP to reduce its cash requirements for infrastructure improvements once the Constellation contract expires. The MLP will also be able to absorb some of the increased power costs within existing rates as a result of a 23% decrease in its workforce since 1998. The Municipal Light Board and MLP staff are confident that Wellesley residents and businesses will continue to receive highly reliable electric service at rates significantly below those paid by surrounding communities well into the future.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT – ANNUAL REPORT July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005

The Recreation Department enjoyed its first full year of occupancy at the Warren Building. In honor of our one-year anniversary, staff coordinated what will be an annual event called the Spring Thaw. This free event is geared towards Wellesley families and it will be held on a Sunday afternoon in April. Last April, the event included an egg hunt, an appearance by a giant bunny, a magic show and a performance by the Red Star Twirlers. Almost 200 children signed up for the event.

During the past year, the Recreation Department ran 490 programs with 5,800 people participating. The number of programs held was a 52% increase over the previous year. Additionally, the department ran two summer day camps with 820 participants. Moses Pond, despite the rainy summer, had a total of 16,794 people use the beach. The Department also coordinated the very popular SUMMERTIME concert series held at the Town Hall Green.